



A Legacy Club Journey: Dominican Republic

DATES

February 12-17, 2024

PRICE

Double Occupancy: \$5,600
Single Occupancy: \$6,600

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

The Dominican Republic's vibrant diversity of plants and animals attracts scores of visitors from around the world. It is home to more than 5,600 plant species and 300 bird species. Residents appreciate the natural environment for its beauty but also depend upon it for food and as a source of livelihood. This is why The Nature Conservancy has helped establish national parks and marine managed areas around the country from areas surrounding Samaná Bay to Parque Nacional del Este (also known as Parque Nacional Cotubanamá). These protected areas promote sustainable fisheries and coral reef and mangrove conservation, and also support the government's commitment to protect 20% of its marine and nearshore environment by 2020 through the Caribbean Challenge Initiative.

This journey starts in the country's capital, Santo Domingo. From there, experience the Samaná Peninsula, and the best swimming and bird-watching spots at Parque Nacional del Este, ending on the white beaches of Punta Cana. You can also get a closer look at colorful reefs teeming with sea life at the numerous snorkeling sites along the coast.

Along the way, learn from our staff and local partners how The Nature Conservancy conserves nature to support the lives and livelihoods of the island's population.

TNC TRAVEL VALUES

ACCESS:

Travel with renowned Conservancy experts and local partners for an exclusive, behind-the-scenes experience. You won't just see amazing places, you'll witness how you are helping save them.

IMPACT:

See how your commitment to our planet and your passion for conservation are making a difference. You will see the wild places and the communities you are impacting.

KNOWLEDGE:

Learn how we are applying the latest cutting-edge science to affect global change and drive conservation.

INSPIRATION:

Immerse yourself in local cultures and awe-inspiring landscapes to foster your own connection to our world.

GLOBALLY MINDED:

Elevate your understanding of our work by seeing first-hand how TNC and our partners act locally and how we turn local results in to global impact by scaling solutions that work.

CODE OF CONDUCT:

Please [click here to read The Nature Conservancy's Code of Conduct](#), our guide to ensuring that we treat each other with respect, fairness, and integrity beyond reproach. We expect our travel partners to adhere to these standards as they lead trips, and we hope that you will embrace this with us.



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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WHALE WATCHING

Search for humpback whales in Samaná Bay, a critical sanctuary and calving ground for these majestic mammals.

CORAL RESTORATION

Don snorkeling gear for a close-up look at how The Nature Conservancy is using cutting-edge science to restore diverse, resilient reefs and helping ensure their protection throughout the Caribbean and beyond.

PARQUE NACIONAL DEL ESTE

Explore one of the Dominican Republic's most treasured national parks and visit beautiful Saona Island for a chance to swim in the protected blue waters of the Caribbean Sea.

Your trip supports the local communities you're traveling in and The Nature Conservancy's efforts locally and globally. This trip has been planned specifically by The Nature Conservancy's team of scientific experts and travel liaisons to immerse you in the work the Conservancy is doing on the ground that has global consequences.



© Mark Godfrey/TNC

THE CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE

SAMANÁ BAY

At over 75,000 hectares, Samaná Bay is the largest semi-enclosed bay in the Caribbean and contains the most extensive mangroves and shrimp fisheries in the country. The bay is also the most important sanctuary for humpback whales in the North Atlantic, serving as critical calving and nursery grounds, and provides a substantial contribution to the local economy. Approximately 2,000 fishers depend on the bay for their livelihood and as a source of food for their families, however unsustainable fishing practices have significantly depleted fish stocks.

To reduce threats to marine biodiversity in Samaná Bay, The Nature Conservancy and the Center for Conservation and Eco-Development (CEBSE) of Samaná Bay and its surroundings are actively working with collaborating partners to protect critical fish habitats, establish new locally managed marine conserved areas and promote the growth of ecotourism to foster alternative livelihoods.

PUNTA CANA

Purchased by American investors in 1969, Punta Cana has become one of the Dominican Republic's most important tourist destinations and a critical part of the country's economy. Innovative sustainability practices have been developed here and the area serves as a model for global ecotourism.

PARQUE NACIONAL DEL ESTE

Encompassing both land and sea on the southeastern tip of the Dominican Republic, Parque Nacional del Este is home to over 500 species of flowers and over 140 species of birds. Sea turtles nest on beautiful Saona Island and dolphins, humpback whales and manatees can be found in the surrounding seas. The park was founded in 1975 with support from The Nature Conservancy.

ITINERARY

DAY 1 — Sunday, February 11th | Arrive at Santo Domingo International Airport (SDQ). Plan to arrive early enough so you can enjoy a few hours exploring Santo Domingo's Colonial Zone, the city's historic core and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Explore the winding streets, pop into museums and churches, or shop in local boutiques. Upon arrival at the airport, you will be welcomed by your guide and transferred to your hotel. After settling in, enjoy a welcome reception and group dinner to kick off the trip.

OVERNIGHT AT HODELPA NICOLAS DE OVANDO

DAY 2 — Monday, February 12th | This morning, enjoy breakfast before departing two and a half hours to the Samaná Peninsula. Your home base for the next two nights is The Bannister Hotel & Yacht Club, located just outside of Samaná town.

After lunch, we'll board skiff boats for Cayo la Farola, a small cay near Samaná that TNC is helping to turn into an eco-tourism site along with partner CEBSE. A short nature trail takes you around the beautiful cay, including to the whale monitoring platform. Keep an eye out for humpback whales while enjoying the sun and breeze.

Dinner tonight is at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT AT BANNISTER HOTEL & YACHT CLUB

DAY 3 — Tuesday, February 13th | This morning, go out in search of humpback whales, an experience that is sure to be on any bucket list. Join a whale watching tour with Whale Samaná, led by the esteemed Kim Beddall, who also serves on the Board of Directors of CEBSE. We recommend grabbing a seat up top, near Kim, so you can pepper her with questions.

After lunch, the afternoon is yours to enjoy as you choose. Stroll along the waterfront in Samaná town, visit the local Whale Museum or relax at the hotel. We'll regroup this evening for dinner in town.

OVERNIGHT AT BANNISTER HOTEL & YACHT CLUB

DAY 4 — Wednesday, February 14th | Enjoy breakfast while overlooking the water before beginning our journey to Punta Cana. We'll board a private charter boat, spending 45 minutes crossing Samana Bay and docking in Sabana de la Mar. A two hour and 15-minute drive along the coastline will bring us to Punta Cana. Our home for the next three nights is The Westin Puntacana Resort & Club; enjoy your afternoon at leisure, heading to the beach or pool for a swim. We will reconvene for dinner as a group, dining seaside at The Westin's Brassa Grill.

OVERNIGHT AT THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

LODGING



© Hodelpa Nicolas de Ovando

HODELPA NICOLÁS DE OVANDO

Dating from 1502, this hotel in the heart of the Colonial Zone was originally home to Santo Domingo's fifth Spanish governor of the Americas, Nicolás de Ovando. It was during his tenure that the construction of what is now the colonial city of Santo Domingo began.



© The Bannister Hotel & Yacht Club

THE BANNISTER HOTEL & YACHT CLUB

Nestled between the mountains and the sea on Samaná Bay, this boutique hotel is a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World.



© The Westin Punta Cana Resort & Club

THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

The Westin is part of Puntacana Resort & Club's pioneering approach to sustainable tourism, which includes a Zero Waste program, sustainable agriculture initiatives and ridgeway hawk and turtle conservation efforts, among others.

ITINERARY, CONT.

DAY 5 — Thursday, February 15th | After breakfast on-site, visit the resort's Center for Marine Innovation to learn more about their coral restoration efforts. Then don snorkeling gear to check out nearby coral gardens to see coral outplanting at work.

After lunch on-site at the Westin, visit the Center for Sustainability for an introduction to Grupo Puntacana Foundation's work and their partnership with TNC. Here, learn about the resort's sustainability practices and related projects in the Punta Cana area.

Afterwards, choose to explore the Indigenous Eyes Eco-Reserve, a 1,500-acre protected area dedicated to conservation, scientific research and recreation. We will reconvene for dinner as a group.

OVERNIGHT AT THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

DAY 6 — Friday, February 16th | After breakfast this morning, transfer to Bayahibe, approximately one hour southwest, to meet with TNC partner FUNDEMAR and explore the famed Parque Nacional del Este (also referred to as Parque Nacional Cotubanamá). Visit FUNDEMAR's coral laboratory to learn the science behind their coral restoration work and then board a skiff for a water-based tour of the park. The tour will take you past rocky shoreline, mangroves filled with frigate birds and protected swimming spots before reaching beautiful Saona Island. Enjoy a picnic lunch and free time on the beach before the return trip to Bayahibe and then Punta Cana.

Tonight, we'll gather at La Yola for a final, celebratory dinner and reflections on the week together.

OVERNIGHT AT THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

DAY 7 — Saturday, February 17th | Breakfast this morning is at your leisure. Transfers to Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ) will be arranged based on flight itineraries.



PRICE DETAIL

Double Occupancy: \$5,600
Single Occupancy: \$6,600

Price is based on minimum of 14 travelers. Trip size not to exceed 14 travelers.

Price **includes** all lodging, transportation once in the Dominican Republic, airport transfers from Santo Domingo (SDQ) and Punta Cana (PUJ), activities, tips, meals, TNC expert staff and local guides. Price does **not include** your inbound flight to Santo Domingo (SDQ) or your return flight from Punta Cana (PUJ), or your chosen nearby airport.

PLEASE NOTE: This itinerary is representative of your trip and like all natural history excursions, activities are subject to modification based on weather and unforeseen circumstances. We will do our best to keep you informed on any necessary changes.